

Transactions

MARCH/APRIL 2004

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
FOR THE NINE-COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



In Print

2003 Annual Report

The just-released 2003 Annual Report for MTC and its offshoots — the Bay Area Toll Authority and the Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways — introduces a sampling of our customers. Ranging in age from 9 to 66 and representing the rainbow of the Bay Area's ethnic richness, the 11 people profiled have come to rely on MTC's growing suite of innovative traveler services to help them get where they want to go, when they need to get there.

Gracing the cover of the annual report is 17-year-old Chris Ramirez, a Berkeley resident and extreme public transit fan who commutes by bus and BART to high school in San Francisco. Chris regularly dials the 511 phone service to figure out the best route to school, and logs on to the online 511 TakeTransit™ Trip Planner to map weekend excursions by AC Transit, BART, Caltrain and Muni.

The 2003 Annual Report also contains MTC's complete, audited financial report for fiscal year 2002–03.

The report can be viewed online at www.mtc.ca.gov. To order a hard copy, contact the MTC Library:
E-mail library@mtc.ca.gov
Fax 510.464.7852
Phone 510.464.7836

MTC Takes 511 Traveler Information System to the Next Level

COMMUTER'S BEST FRIEND OFFERS FREE DRIVING-TIME ESTIMATES ON THE PHONE AND ON THE WEB

The Bay Area's award-winning 511 Traveler Information System — available toll free by calling 511 or on the Web at www.511.org — is adding new features to put even more information at the fingertips of motorists, public transit riders, carpoolers/vanpoolers and bicyclists. MTC recently unveiled a new 511 Transit Web Site with an enhanced version of the popular TakeTransit™ Trip Planner, which creates customized itineraries. And March 2004 saw the introduction of a new phone and Web service known as 511 Driving Times™, which harnesses intelligent technology to inform drivers how long it will take to reach their destinations.

MTC and Caltrans have been installing overhead antennas along freeways that can measure traffic speeds via FasTrak™ electronic toll transponders affixed to the windshields and dashboards of 400,000-plus vehicles in the Bay Area. Combining FasTrak™ feedback with information from Caltrans' system of roadway-embedded loop detectors, the 511 Driving Times™ feature debuted on a select number of routes, with the rest of the Bay Area's freeways and bridges to be phased in over the next few years.

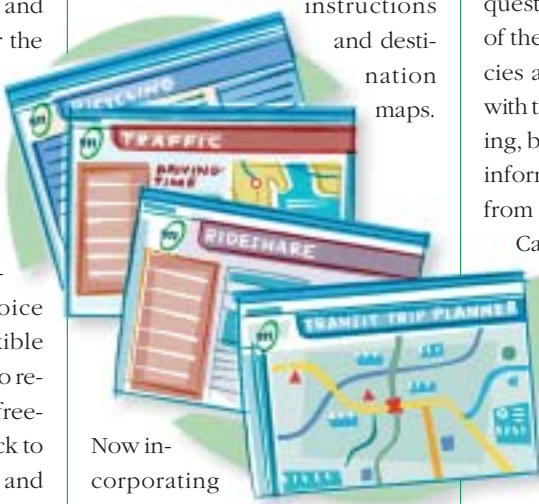
Enhanced Traffic Features

In addition to point-to-point driving times, the 511 phone service now offers a whole range of enhanced traffic features, including a faster voice response system; more flexible navigation that allows callers to request conditions on various freeways without having to go back to the traffic conditions menu; and more detail about incidents (such as location by city) and slowdowns (with actual traffic speeds in Driving Times™ corridors).

"The Bay Area is the first metropolitan area in the United States to offer this level of detail on traffic conditions through a toll-free 511 system," said MTC Deputy Director Ann Flemer.

Internet-savvy motorists also can check a new 511 Driving Times™ page at the Traveler Information Web Portal, located at www.511.org, before they get behind the wheel.

Meanwhile, MTC's popular Transit Web Site has been upgraded and relocated to the 511 Web Portal. The site's centerpiece is an updated version of the online TakeTransit™ Trip Planner, which generates personalized itineraries with schedules, fares, time estimates, transfer instructions and destination maps.



Now incorporating key data for some 20 Bay Area transit operators, the Trip Planner will be expanded this spring to include the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, SamTrans, Santa Rosa CityBus and the Golden Gate Transit bus network (Golden Gate ferry schedules are already in the Trip Planner database).

Marketing to Spur Usage

Spearheaded by MTC at a cost of \$38 million over six years, the phone and Web-based 511 Traveler Information System relies on a partnership among MTC, the California Highway Patrol, Caltrans, dozens of the region's transit and paratransit operators, and the Regional Rideshare Program.

About half of the 200,000 or so calls a month handled by 511 are for traffic information. Callers requesting to be connected to one of the region's public transit agencies account for another quarter, with the rest split between ridesharing, bicycling, airport and parking information, and other selections from the 511 smorgasbord.

Call volumes are expected to grow in the months ahead as MTC kicks off an aggressive marketing campaign for the 511 Driving Times™ service to let Bay Area drivers know about this powerful new tool that can help them solve the mystery of how long it will take to get from point A to point B.

"We're putting more effort into advertising — and radio ads in particular — than for any other initiative in MTC history," noted Flemer. "We want consumers to think about 511 whenever they leave their home or office." — John Goodwin

Calendar

Unless indicated otherwise, all meetings take place at: Metropolitan Transportation Commission Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter 101 Eighth Street, Oakland Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 28, 2004

10 am
Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways*
10:05 am
Bay Area Toll Authority*
10:15 am
Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

THURSDAY
MAY 6, 2004
10 am
Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee

TUESDAY
MAY 11, 2004
3:30 pm
Minority Citizens Advisory Committee

WEDNESDAY
MAY 12, 2004
9:30 am
Administration Committee*
10 am
Bay Area Toll Authority Oversight Committee*
10:15 am
Programming and Allocations Committee*
12:30 pm
MTC Advisory Council

FRIDAY
MAY 14, 2004
9:30 am
Planning and Operations Committee*
10 am
Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways Operations Committee*
10:15 am
Legislation Committee*

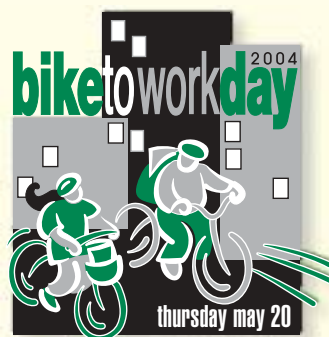
MONDAY
MAY 17, 2004
1:30 pm
Partnership Technical Advisory Committee

WEDNESDAY
MAY 26, 2004
10 am
Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways*
10:05 am
Bay Area Toll Authority*
10:15 am
Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

* Webcast on www.mtc.ca.gov

Note: Dates, times and locations of MTC meetings may change. Please confirm by calling 510.464.7787. Agendas, updated meeting schedules and packets for MTC standing committees are posted on MTC's Web site: www.mtc.ca.gov.

Special Events



THURSDAY
MAY 20, 2004

Pledge to pedal to work and you'll be eligible to win a pair of airline tickets to Hawaii and a range of other prizes. For more information, call 511 or visit www.511.org, where you can also register online. Sponsored by MTC.

FRIDAY
MAY 28, 2004
9 am to 3:30 pm
MetroCenter, Dahms Auditorium
Smart Growth Zoning Codes Workshop

MTC is a cosponsor of this workshop exploring how communities can develop zoning codes and land development regulations that support the creation of more livable communities. The \$35 registration fee includes continental breakfast, lunch and refreshments. For program details and online registration, go to www.lgc.org, or contact Dave Defanti of the Local Government Commission at 916.448.1198, ext. 330, or via e-mail at ddefanti@lgc.org.

Announcement

Excellence in Motion:
Call for Award Nominations



MTC's biennial Transportation Awards Program is seeking nominations. The program recognizes innovations that improve the transportation network; educational programs that promote safety, the use of transit and the like; activities that encourage alternatives to driving alone; volunteers who help brighten our daily commutes; efforts to boost smart growth; and members of the media who do an exceptional job of informing the public.

Nominations also are invited for four special awards:



Doris W. Kahn Accessible Transportation Award
Honors a person or organization whose efforts have benefited the elderly or persons with disabilities. Named for a former MTC commissioner.



John F. Foran Legislative Award
Honors a state or federal legislator whose work has had a positive effect on transportation. Named for the former state lawmaker who authored the bill creating MTC.



Greta Ericson Distinguished Service Award
Recognizes quality leadership in the transportation profession. Named for a former MTC commissioner.



David Tannehill Special Employee Award
Intended for a transportation employee who goes beyond the call of duty. Named for a longtime MTC planner who passed away in 2001.

The deadline for nominations is Friday, June 4, 2004. To submit your nomination online, visit the MTC Web site at <www.mtc.ca.gov>; or call the MTC Public Information Office at 510.464.7787 to request an application form.

Facts & Figures Decisive Win for Regional Measure 2



Voters Say “Yes” to Tolls For Traffic Relief

Bay Area voters' decisive approval of Regional Measure 2 (RM 2) in the March 2 election delivered a big win for commuters. The measure raises tolls on the seven state-owned toll bridges by \$1 in order to fund an ambitious \$1.5 billion list of capital projects contained in the Regional Traffic Relief Plan.

“Bay Area voters reaffirmed their commitment to building and maintaining an efficient, diverse and balanced transportation system,” commented MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger.

Developed by the state Legislature with assistance from MTC, public transit agencies, and Bay Area business and environmental groups, the Regional Traffic Relief Plan calls for easing key freeway bottlenecks; new rail, express bus and ferry projects; seismic strength-

ening of the transbay BART tube; redevelopment of the Transbay Terminal in downtown San Francisco; a new bus/ferry terminal in Vallejo; regionwide implementation of MTC's TransLink® transit-fare smart card system; and a host of improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Recognizing that new buses, trains and ferries will do little to improve regional transit service without funds to pay the drivers, mechanics and dispatchers needed to operate them, the Regional Traffic Relief Plan dedicates some \$1.6 billion over the next 35 years to transit operations. This is in addition to the \$1.5 billion in capital spending.

However, because tolls collected on bridges that receive federal dollars cannot be used for transit operations — and three of the state-owned bridges currently receive

federal funds for seismic retrofit work — a special exemption must be secured to permit RM 2 toll revenues on those bridges to be spent in support of transit operations. The Golden Gate Bridge already enjoys such an exemption, and MTC is working in Washington, D.C., to secure similar treatment for the bridges covered by RM 2.

MTC, in its role as the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA), is scheduled to formally certify the election results — and adopt a new toll schedule — April 28. The RM 2 toll hike takes effect July 1, 2004, and is projected to raise \$125 million annually. To entice more motorists to pay tolls electronically, MTC/BATA has proposed delaying the \$1 increase for four months for cars and other two-axle vehicles equipped with FasTrak™ transponders.

— John Goodwin

| Regional Measure 2: County-by-County Results | | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| County | Votes Cast | Votes “Yes” | Percent “Yes” |
| Alameda | 295,595 | 164,497 | 56% |
| Contra Costa | 235,933 | 121,167 | 51% |
| Marin | 79,772 | 51,285 | 64% |
| San Francisco | 169,105 | 115,891 | 69% |
| San Mateo | 147,367 | 81,381 | 55% |
| Santa Clara | 299,771 | 178,540 | 60% |
| Solano | 75,564 | 30,980 | 41% |
| Total | 1,303,107 | 743,741 | 57% |
| Earning 57 percent of the total regionwide vote, RM 2 received its most emphatic support in San Francisco and Marin counties. The largest single bloc of affirmative votes came from Santa Clara County. Only in Solano County did RM 2 fail to win a majority of the vote. | | | |

Source: County Registrars

Lawrence Dahms Tapped to Lead City CarShare



Larry Dahms

City CarShare has turned to a veteran of the local transportation scene to provide leadership for the fledgling non-profit organization: Lawrence D. Dahms, who served as MTC's executive director for 23 years until he retired in December 2000. Dahms

will chair the board of directors for a term of one year.

Launched in 2001 and based in San Francisco, City CarShare offers short-term rental cars as a way of reducing car ownership and usage, while improving the environment and city life. The 3,000 members have 24-hour



PETER BEELER

Sign on today at <www.citycarshare.org>.

access to over 75 late-model cars at nearly 40 locations throughout the Bay Area for \$2 to \$4 per hour and 44 cents per mile.

Commission Actions

January 2004

- Approved the ABAG*/MTC Task Force final report and recommendations for fostering closer collaboration between the two agencies. The report calls for the creation of a permanent joint policy committee — consisting of representatives from both boards — that would have authority to review and comment on regional plans or strategies devised by either agency. The committee will focus its initial efforts on developing incentives and information sharing strategies to implement the Smart Growth Vision adopted by ABAG and MTC in 2003. In approving the report, the Commission also requested that the Bay Area Air Quality Management District be invited to join the new joint policy committee.

February 2004

- Acting through the Administration Committee, authorized \$150,000 to study how four transit operators serving suburban areas of the East Bay (Central Contra Costa Transit Authority, Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority, Western Contra Costa Transit Authority and Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority) can collectively improve transit service efficiency and effectiveness. The study will include an analysis of both functional and possible institutional consolidations among the four agencies.

March 2004

- Released the draft 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for review and held a public hearing on the RTIP on March 24, 2004. Scheduled for adoption on April 28, 2004, the draft 2004 RTIP reflects Bay Area funding priorities for inclusion in California's 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program. Due to the state's difficult budget situation, no new funds are available for transportation projects. The draft 2004 RTIP therefore reschedules projects from early years to later years of the RTIP program cycle.
- Acted to support a state bill that would increase the size of MTC's governing board as a way of making the Commission more proportionally representative of current population patterns in the region. AB 2741 (Salinas/Wolk) would add two new voting members — one to be appointed by the mayor of Oakland and the other by the mayor of San Jose — to the Commission's roster.

*Association of Bay Area Governments

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION WWW.MTC.CA.GOV

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- Jon Rubin, Vice Chair
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